

**BEAUFONT FIRST SCHOOL,  
NURSERY AND BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CLUB**

***NURTURING HAPPINESS, ACHIEVEMENT AND RESPECT***

**RESTRAINT - 'SAFE TOUCH' POLICY**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date approved by govs</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
1.0	May 2023	New separate Policy specifically for 'Safe Touch' linked to new Behaviour Policy	GB/ JS	May 2023	May 2026

## **Statement of Intent**

At Beaufront First School, it is understood that appropriate relationships between staff and children are paramount in promoting the safeguarding of children.

We have adopted an informed, evidence based decision to allow safe touch as a developmentally appropriate intervention that will aid healthy growth and learning.

This policy aims to ensure that all staff carry out safe, confident and dignified practice when using appropriate, necessary and/or planned touch. It has been created with the aim of ensuring that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities in terms of appropriate and inappropriate touch when involving pupils.

All children are entitled to receive an education in an environment where they feel safe, secure and respected. The school will dedicate itself to ensuring that no pupils feel threatened or disrespected, in terms of physical contact between themselves or a member of staff.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policies
- Intimate Care Policy
- Behaviour Policy

### **1. Legal Framework**

1.1 This policy has due regard, but not limited to, the following legislation:

- The Children Act, 1989
- Equality Act, 2010

1.2 It also has due regard to the following guidance:

- *Use of Reasonable Force in Schools*, DfE, 2013
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, DfE, 2018
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, DfE, 2022
- *Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention*, DfE, 2019
- *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, UNICEF, 2017

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

2.1. All members of staff at Beaufront have a duty of care towards pupils, and must be aware of the boundaries and procedures involving physical contact.

2.2. The headteacher, as DSL, is responsible for organising and/or conducting regular safeguarding training for all members of staff and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities, in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

2.3. The headteacher, as DSL, is responsible for ensuring that all staff engage in safe touch with pupils, and only where absolutely necessary.

2.4. All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that no pupil feels threatened or unsafe at our school as a result of inappropriate touch.

2.5. All members of staff have a responsibility to report any instances of inappropriate touch to the headteacher.

2.6. The headteacher is responsible for communicating with parents/carers and ensuring that they are aware of this policy.

2.7. The school has a responsibility for ensuring that it creates and promote a culture in which pupils' wishes and feelings are respected.

## **3. What is safe touch?**

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, "safe touch" is defined as physical contact that, if otherwise avoided, would be inhumane, unkind and potentially emotionally or physically damaging for the pupil.

3.2. Safe touch should never be invasive, humiliating or flirtatious.

3.3. The school understands that the following examples are instances of safe touch which may occur between staff and pupils:

- Comforting an upset or distressed pupil
- Congratulating or praising a pupil
- Holding the hand of a pupil to guide them, such as when crossing a road or walking to assembly
- Giving first aid to a pupil
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons
- Administering medicine

- Using musical instruments (*Use of Reasonable Force in Schools*, DfE, 2013, p.8)

#### **4. Why 'Safe Touch'?**

If children are behaving in unacceptable, threatening, dangerous, aggressive, or out of control ways, they have not yet learned how their strongest emotional reactions can be contained, channelled and communicated safely.

In recognition of this, under special, agreed, and supervised conditions, trained staff will consider using safe touch as one of the means available to them, for example, to calm a distressed child, to contain an angry or out of control child and/ or encourage or affirm an anxious child, or to support a child with low self-esteem.

Safe touch used to calm, soothe and regulate a child's emotions is a needed developmental experience. The brain does not develop neural pathways to initiate calming and self-soothing unless and until this safe emotional regulation has been experienced within a positive relationship with a significant adult. Where children have had insufficient experience of safe touch and calming regulation, this may be a priority to help their brains to develop access to thinking, judging, evaluating and choosing mechanisms. These are sometimes known as 'higher executive skills' and they are an intrinsic part of cognitive regulation.

Refraining to physically, safely holding a child in the face of their intense grief, stress and/or rage reactions can lead to a state of hyper-arousal, in which toxic levels of stress chemicals are released in the body and brain. The severely damaging and long-term effects of this state have been intensively researched worldwide and are well documented. Moreover, gentle safe holding is appropriate if a child:

- is hurting themselves or others
- is likely to damage themselves or others
- is damaging property
- all verbal attempts to engage them have been unsuccessful

Safe touch is one of the ways of regulating children's emotions, but it is a strategy that fully trained staff will only use under supervision and in line with the whole school policy on touch.

Other ways of calming, soothing and containing a child's strong emotions may include:

- slowing one's pace
- lowering one's voice
- breathing more deeply
- initially matching the pitch and volume of the child's display of emotion and then regulating it down

- talking slowly, firmly and quietly in a calm way
- providing clear, predictable, consistently held boundaries

## **5. Types of safe touch**

5.1. Staff should ensure that safe touch only occurs in the presence of other adults or responsible children, and that it does not indicate favour towards particular pupils.

5.2. Pupils should never be touched in a way that could be misinterpreted as anything other than appropriate adult-child support.

5.3. Pupils should not be touched between the waist and mid-thigh, or on/near the chest (unless specifically required during a First Aid procedure or Team Teach physical intervention).

5.4. In line with specialist advice from teams such as ENABLE, children may have touch as a prescribed method of calming or supporting. For example, deep compression is a recognised technique in supporting children with sensory needs and heightened states, and may be part of a specially developed programme for some children. Massage and deep compression will therefore involve an adult touching a child on their hands, wrists, arms, shoulders, back or lower legs, for example. This will always be through their clothes and will follow the specific techniques advised by the specialists.

### **5.4. Types of Physical Contact**

The school recognises that certain types of physical contact between staff and pupils can be inappropriate, e.g. cuddling, lap-sitting, and that safe touch should never be invasive, humiliating or flirtatious. Hugs should be for limited durations and ideally be shoulder hugs (from the side, not face on). More appropriate types of physical contact such as high-fives and gentle shoulder squeezes are preferable, e.g. when physical contact is initiated by a member of staff as means of praise.

5.5. For pupils within the Early Years Foundation Stage, it may be more appropriate on occasion for closer physical contact, while appropriate child-adult relationships are being established. The points above still apply, however, except that sitting on the knee and hugs might occur more regularly and be of longer duration, if such support is required by the child.

5.6. If a pupil requires assistance with changing clothes, great care must be taken to ensure that all physical contact is specifically and only for the purpose of the operation being carried out.

5.7. For intimate care (especially toileting), see the school's Intimate Care Policy

5.8. The school understands that pupils are not always aware of the boundaries between staff and pupils and thus may try to engage in physical contact such as lap-sitting or inappropriate hugging. Should a pupil try to engage in any inappropriate physical contact, the member of staff will limit or refuse this as appropriate, explaining why and offering an alternative.

5.9. If a member of staff attempts to use one of the safe methods of touch and a pupil is unhappy with this, the member of staff will cease contact immediately in order to respect the pupil's wishes.

5.10. Appropriate touch involving pupils with SEND will be in line with their EHC plan or IHP.

## **6. Reasonable Force and Physical Restraint**

*The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involves a degree of physical contact with pupils. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a student.*

DfE guidance, July 2013

6.1. Beaufront First School understands that there are times when members of staff must provide physical intervention if a child presents danger to themselves or others.

6.2. All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force. In these instances, staff must always explain the reasons for their actions to the pupil and why it was necessary. All instances will be logged using CPOMS.

6.3. Reasonable force may be required in order to control or restrain a pupil in extreme circumstances, such as needing to guide a pupil to safety.

6.4. At all times, members of staff must ensure they use reasonable force in such a way as to avoid any injury to the pupil, but the school recognises that in some extreme cases, such as immediate intervention to prevent worse physical injury, this may not be possible.

6.5. Staff are able to use reasonable force to:

- prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others including members of staff, from damaging property, or from causing disorder
- remove disruptive children from the classroom or place of learning (when out at events/ school trips etc...) if they will not otherwise leave

- prevent a pupil from leaving a room or place if they are likely to be at risk or behave in ways that disrupts the learning and wellbeing of others
- to control or restrain a child in an otherwise out of control situation

6.6 Staff will only use reasonable force when, in their professional opinion, there are no other reasonable options available to them.

6.7. Schools cannot use force as a punishment – this is always unlawful.

6.8. The headteacher and authorised staff are able to use reasonable force to search for specified 'prohibited items' (namely: knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images, and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property). Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

6.9 In line with the DfE guidance, 'Use of Reasonable Force', staff at Beaufront will always consider physical restraint as a last resort, i.e. in exceptional or extreme circumstances.

6.10 When a child has been physically restrained this will be logged on CPOMS and with the DSL/ Deputy DSL, and parents will be informed.

6.11 If it is determined that the child may need to be restrained again in the future parents will be informed and involved in devising an appropriate action plan to minimise the need for physical restraint and to plan for it accordingly.

6.12 If a child leaves the premises without permission staff will attempt to keep them in sight and encourage them to return. If they are in danger they will be restrained while awaiting a parent. Parents will always be contacted and if a child goes missing the police will be informed.

## **7. Reporting inappropriate touch**

7.1. If a pupil attempts to engage in any inappropriate touch, the member of staff involved will report this immediately to the headteacher, in order to prevent any allegations of inappropriate physical contact.

7.2. If another member of staff suspects or witnesses inappropriate physical contact, whereby the member of staff is willingly involved, they will report this to the headteacher immediately.

7.3. Where it is reported that a staff member has engaged, or is suspected to have engaged, in touch that is not appropriate in line with this policy and the Staff Code of Conduct, this will be handled in line with the Safeguarding Policy, or, where there

have been multiple reports of inappropriate touch or an instance of touch which is severely inappropriate, the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

7.4. The headteacher will keep a written record of all instances of reported inappropriate touch.

## **8. Training of Staff**

8.1 All staff will receive formal Safeguarding training, which includes safe touch guidance.

8.2 The headteacher/ SLT will ensure that all staff involved in working with children who may need to be restrained are appropriately trained at the earliest opportunity in line with current guidance.

8.3 All staff will regularly be reminded of this policy, which will be reviewed every 3 years or as needed in line with Beaufront's inclusive, equal opportunities ethos.